

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-10 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

/065 W

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R 230906Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5415

INFO AMEMBASSY GABOFONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 1337

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LT, KN, KS

SUBJECT: LESOTHO RECONSIDERING ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH
NORTH KOREA

REF: A. STATE 298386; B. STATE 126842; C. STATE 296424 (NOTAL);
D. MASERU 1308

1. SUMMARY: CHARGE CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER MOLAPO DEC 22, TO DELIVER

LETTER FROM SECRETARY (REF C) AND TO RAISE SUBJECT OF LESOTHO
RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA. MINISTER WAS PLEASED TO RECEIVE LETTER
AND HINTED THAT DECISION ON ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA
WAS NOT FINAL. SOUTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR YEON, IN MASERU OVER WEEKEND,
REPORTEDLY GAINED IMPRESSION LESOTHO MAY NOT GO THROUGH WITH
EARLIER PLAN TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. CHARGE'S MEETING WITH MOLAPO WAS EXTREMELY SHORT, AS MINISTER
WAS ON WAY TO SEE PRIME MINISTER; MOST OF CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE
WALKING DOWN HALLWAY. MOLAPO SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO
RECEIVE SECRETARY'S LETTER AT THIS TIME. CHARGE QUICKLY MADE POINTS
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CONTAINED REF B. MINISTER REPLIED ONLY THAT HE SAW NOT ONE GOOD

REASON FOR ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH NORTH KOREA.

3. SOUTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR YEON ARRIVED MASERU MID-DAY DEC 19 AND DEPARTED EARLY DEC 20. HE TELEPHONED EMBASSY ON ARRIVAL AND PROMISED TO BRIEF US BEFORE DEPARTURE ON RESULTS HIS TALKS WITH GOL OFFICIALS, BUT FAILED TO DO SO. HOWEVER, HE LEFT VERBAL MESSAGE FOR US WITH CHINESE AMBASSADOR LIU TO EFFECT THAT HE HAD SEEN BOTH MOLAPO AND PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN. PRIME MINISTER REPORTEDLY TOLD YEON THAT HE WAS NOT FINALLY COMMITTED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA, AND MOLAPO REPORTEDLY SAID HE WAS OPPOSED TO SUCH TIES ALTHOUGH HIS PREDECESSOR (FORMER FONMIN KOTSOKOANE) HAD FAVORED ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA. YEON REPORTEDLY DEPARTED GREATLY REASSURED.

4. COMMENT: MOLAPO IS ONE OF MOST ANTI-COMMUNIST MEMBERS OF CABINET. HE OPPOSED HIS PREDECESSOR'S VISIT TO PEKING, HAS BEEN STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF REPUBLIC OF CHINA, AND STRONGLY FAVORS CLOSE TIES WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES OVER RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. HE IS ALSO CONSIDERED TO BE A POWER IN THE RULING NATIONAL PARTY. IF, AS HE HINTED TO US AND REPORTEDLY TOLD YEON, HE INTENDS TO TRY TO BLOCK ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA, AND IF PRIME MINISTER IS NOT, IN FACT, FULLY COMMITTED TO SUCH TIES, CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT LESOTHO WILL NOT ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH NORTH KOREA. EVEN IF TIES ARE ESTABLISHED, CHANCES OF MAINTAINING GOL SUPPORT FOR U.S. POSITIONS ON KOREAN ISSUES IN UNGA WILL REMAIN GOOD, ESPECIALLY WHILE MOLAPO IS FOREIGN MINISTER.
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Message Attributes

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